Darkinjung language

Darkinjung (Darrkinyung; many other spellings; see below) is an Australian Aboriginal language, the traditional language of the Darkinjung people. While no audio recordings of the language survive, several researchers have compiled wordlists and grammatical descriptions. It has been classified as a language no longer fully spoken[3] and it can be classified as needing a language renewal[4] program. It was spoken adjacent to Dharuk, Wiradhuri, Guringai, Gamilaraay, and Awabakal. The Darkinjung tribe occupied a small part of southeastern Australia inside what is now the New South Wales area. They likely inhabited a considerable tract of land within Hunter, Northumberland, and Cook counties.[5]

Darkinjung	
Hawkesbury–MacDonald River	
Region	New South Wales, Australia
Ethnicity	Darkinjung, Darkinung
Extinct	before sound recordings
Revival	A small number of second-language users in revival program
Language family	Pama–Nyungan ▪ Yuin–Kuric ▪ Yora ▪ **Darkinjung**
Dialects	Darrkinyung Hawkesbury River–Broken Bay?
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	xda
Glottolog	hawk1239 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/hawk1239)[1]
AIATSIS[2]	S65 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/S65)

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Alternate Names

The name of the language has various spellings as recorded by both Mathews and W.J. Enright, among others, whom worked off of documentation from the 19th century:[6]

- *Darkinjang* (Tindale 1974)
- *Darkinjung*
- *Darkiñung* (Mathews 1903)
- *Darrkinyung*
- *Darginjang*
- *Darginyung*
- *Darkinung*
- *Darkinoong*
- *Darknüng*

- Darkinyung

Revitalisation effort

Traditional lands of Australian Aboriginal tribes around Sydney, New South Wales

Since 2003 there has been a movement from the Darkinyung language group to revitalise the language. They started working with the original field reports of Robert H. Mathews and W. J. Enright. Where there were gaps in the sparsely populated wordlists, words were taken from lexically similar nearby languages. This led to the publication of the work *Darkinyung grammar and dictionary: revitalising a language from historical sources*.[6] This may be ordered from the publisher, Muurrbay Language Centre at http://www.muurrbay.org.au/muurrbay-resources/.

Phonology

Much of our understanding of Darkinjung comes from papers published by R.H. Mathews in 1903. When analyzing these sources, we may generalize that there were around 15 consonants phonemes, and approximately 3 vowels.[6]

Consonants

	Bilabial	**Dental**	**Alveolar**	**Palatal**	**Velar**
Oral Stop	b	d̪	d	ɟ	g
Nasal	m	n̪	n	ɲ	ŋ
Trill			r		
Approximant	w		ɹ	j	
Lateral Approximant			l		

In Darkinjung, like many Australian languages, b, d, and g are interchangeable with p, t, and k and will not change the meaning of the word. The fact that this table shows b, d, and g is arbitrary.

Vowels

	Front Unrounded	Central Unrounded	Back Rounded
High	ɪ		ʊ
Low		ɐ	

Morphology

"Tags"[6]

Darkinjung makes use of what Mathews refers to as "tags," or suffixes to denote relationships between objects in sentences.[6]

Number tags -bula "two" and -biyn "several"

miri-bula
a couple of dogs

Possessor Tag: -gayi

guri- gayi bargan
man POSS boomerang
'a man's boomerang'

Locative "at, on, in" tags: -a/ -da/ -dja/ -ga/ -wa

The locative tags -ga and -wa appear to be found after stems ending in vowels.[6]

gawin-da nhayi
bank-Loc that.over.there

'on the other side'

Words with locational information seem to coincide with nouns that also carry a locative tag:

wallang-gayn-dja gundji-ga gara-dhi
behind-?-Loc hut-Loc hide-Pres

'around the house, hidden'

Ergative case tags: -a/ -da/ -ga/ -ya. Words that end in the consonant ŋ receive that tag /-ga/

nyugang-ga wagar mana-yi
woman-Erg perch get-Past

'the woman caught a perch'

References

1. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Hawkesbury" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/hawk1239). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
2. S65 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/S65) Darkinjung at the Australian Indigenous Languages Database, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
3. National Indigenous Languages Survey Report 2005
4. Australian Indigenous Languages Framework (Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia, 1996)
5. Mathews, R. H. (1 January 1903). "Languages of the Kamilaroi and Other Aboriginal Tribes of New South Wales" (https://zenodo.org/record/1449596/files/article.pdf) (PDF). *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*. **33**: 259–283. doi:10.2307/2842812 (https://doi.org/10.2307%2F2842812). JSTOR 2842812 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/2842812).
6. Jones, Caroline (2008). *Darkinyung grammar and dictionary: revitalising a language from historical sources*. Nambucca Heads, Australia: Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative. ISBN 978-0-9775351-9-4.

Additional References

- R. H. Mathews (July–December 1903). "Languages of the Kamilaroi and Other Aboriginal Tribes of New South Wales". *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*. Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. **33**: 259–283. doi:10.2307/2842812 (https://doi.org/10.2307%2F2842812). JSTOR 2842812 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/2842812).

External links

- Bibliography of Darkinjung people and language resources (http://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language_bibs/darkinung_darkinjung_darkinoong.pdf), at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

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